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UNCLAS HARARE 000584

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR AF/S, DRL
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR JFRAZER

E. O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: GOZ BACKS AWAY FROM CONFRONTATION WITH ZCTU?

Ref: Harare 550

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1. (SBU) An interesting exchange between the Minister of Labor, July Moyo, and an employers' representative reportedly took place in a recent Tripartite Negotiating Forum meeting. When the employers' rep asked the Minister's view on whether or not his association should be dealing with the GOZ-created shell labor organization Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions (ZFTU), Moyo replied, "There is only one king at a time..." Employer and labor reps both took this as an indication that the GOZ was backing away from its previous heavy-handed support of the group it created to challenge the primacy of the internationally-recognized (and opposition aligned) Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU).

2. (SBU) Comment: Whether this position reflects the GOZ's formal strategy is unclear. There is no doubt that the GOZ has gained much useful propaganda (as well as an increased veneer of legitimacy) from its very public "consultations" with the ZCTU in the TNF meetings (ref). Last year, the GOZ actually paid for the rival ZFTU to attend and "advise" at the International Labor Organization's (ILO's) annual convention in Geneva -- although it ultimately granted the ZCTU formal recognition as the accredited labor representative -- where the government gained widespread international condemnation for its campaign against organized labor in general and the ZCTU in particular. Whether or not the GOZ insists on ZFTU participation in this year's ILO conference in May may well indicate its long-term intentions towards the ZCTU. End comment.

Sullivan